

Screenplay

INT. A DARK BEDROOM

A man, ALEX PAGE, sits in a dark bedroom in a chair next to a bed. This scene is familiar to him. The bed is empty, yet the sheet are messy. The clocks reads 1:32. Alex waits patiently. He has been waiting his whole life.

IDEA: Splice in portions of the "study video" created by one of the doctors documenting the case. All of the doctors observations and predictions contradict the story. They are very hopeful.

INT. A QUIET PARTY, SIDE ROOM

ALEX and a small group of friends are chatting in a circle. A man walks by the group, and notices Alex.

MAN

Hey, sorry to barge in - weren't you that kid from... that thing on the news years ago...

PERSON IN GROUP

(side voices)

"Oh, here we go"

"Yeah"

ALEX

Yeah, probably so.

MAN

I'm sorry, bro, didn't mean to bother you. My name is Dave, I'm with the Campus Bureau. I hadn't planned on working tonight, but... could I ask you a few questions?

INT. A QUIET PARTY, OUTSIDE OF CROWD

DAVE

I don't normally attack people with my tape recorder like this, but I haven't heard of you in forever.

ALEX

You've apologized enough. I don't get a lot of attention anymore anyway. How did you recognize me?

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

I'm doing a research paper about sleep patterns, insomnia, and all things related to it - and part of it involves your story.

ALEX

Aah.

Dave gets his tape recorder and checks the tape.

DAVE

Let me sum up what I know and you tell me if I'm telling it all correctly.

ALEX

Okay.

Dave starts his tape recorder.

DAVE

This is Dave Klein, and I'm with Alex Page. 23 years...

ALEX holds up four fingers.

DAVE

...24 years ago, Alex was born to a single mother. He was born with a form of Familial Insomnia, yet suffers no side effects of sleeplessness. This man has never slept. He was in every newspaper in his first two years of childhood, defined as "The next step in evolution". As mysterious as sleep itself, no one ever found out why he was like this, so he was allowed to live his life like the rest of us. Now, I'm speaking to him in what is probably his first interview since he was 10, what have you been up to all these years?

Alex thinks a moment, then looks up at Dave.

ALEX

Nothing.

INT. A DARK BEDROOM

Similar to the first scene, but the bed is occupied. The woman, DESIREE, wakes up slowly. This conversation is "dream-like".

DESI  
Do I ever snore?

ALEX  
No, never.

DESI  
You lie.

ALEX  
Okay, sometimes.

DESI tiredly giggles.

ALEX  
But it breaks the silence.

DESI  
I could go home, you know. Your bed is so stiff.

ALEX  
I don't want you to go home.

DESI  
If I was like you, I'd be learning another language or something.

ALEX  
I don't want to.

DESI  
Why not?

ALEX  
I just want to spend all of my extra time with you. I don't want to do anything else.

DESI  
(disappointed)  
I know you don't. Hey, I still need sleep. Okay?

ALEX  
Okay.

Snap back to ALEX sitting along in his room.

INT. A QUIET PARTY, OUTSIDE OF CROWD

DAVE

You have 33% more time in a day  
than anyone else. How does that  
make you feel?

ALEX

(beat)

Bored.

DAVE

Do you own a bed?

ALEX

Yeah, of course.

DAVE

Have you ever used it?

ALEX

Not for sleep.

DAVE

You've never slept ever for a  
second?

ALEX

No.

DAVE

What about sleep medication?

ALEX

Doesn't do anything.

DAVE

What about knockout gases,  
chemicals?

ALEX

Nothing.

DAVE

Have you heard of the other cases  
like yours?

ALEX

Someone mentioned a couple to me,  
but I don't keep up with it.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE  
14 cases in babies last year.

ALEX  
Wow, that's something.

DAVE  
Before that, there was only you.  
Now, 56 cases so far this year.

Alex pauses for a moment.

ALEX  
56? In the last six months?

DAVE  
Yeah. Why haven't you heard of  
this?

ALEX  
I don't like to read the news.

DAVE  
You basically live off the money  
paid to your family to research you  
as a child. Do you think these  
babies with your condition will be  
offered the same luxury?

ALEX  
I don't know...

DAVE  
This is interesting stuff, man!  
Come on! This is worldwide. And it  
started with you!

INT. A DARK BEDROOM

ALEX sits in the bedroom. The bed is empty as it was before. Alex stands up slowly from his chair and feels the bed. He runs his fingers along the pillow where a head once laid. He lays down and stares at the ceiling. His eyes are wide open. After a moment, he sits up. He gets out his cellphone and dials a number.

ALEX  
Hey Desi, it's me.

DESI  
(through phone, very tired)  
I know it's you. Who else would  
call me at this time?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX  
I'm sorry, I forgot-

DESI  
Like you do every night. Just call  
me in the morning.

She hangs up. He hangs up.

INT. A QUIET PARTY, OUTSIDE OF CROWD

DAVE  
It's my belief that we're all going  
to be like you someday. Sure, it'll  
be in about 100 years, but imagine  
it - A world of the dreamless. I  
won't miss dreaming. Not if it  
means never being tired. I won't  
miss being tired, I won't miss  
groggy mornings...

ALEX  
I wouldn't know.

DAVE  
You aren't missing anything.

ALEX  
Listen, I just remembered, I gotta  
run.

DAVE  
Hey wait, here's my number, call me  
if you have time and we'll finish  
this up.

DAVE puts a card in ALEX's hand, then ALEX jogs away from  
house.

DAVE  
(yelling to Alex)  
Nice talking to you!

INT. A DARK BEDROOM

ALEX watches his clock, til it turns to 6 A.M. He has his  
phone in hand. As the clock turns to six, he presses his  
cellphone and puts it to his ear. DESI answers.

DESI

Ah, my daily wake-up call.

ALEX

Too early?

DESI

No, right on time as usual.

ALEX

Sorry about calling you earlier.

DESI

You apologize every time you do that, which seems to be every night.

ALEX

I know.

DESI

I wish I had as much energy as you. There's so much I want to do.

ALEX

I just want to see you.

DESI

Oh, you're sweet.

ALEX

Can I meet you for lunch?

DESI

Sure.

ALEX

Okay, I'll see you then.

DESI

Bye.

ALEX

Bye.

ALEX hangs up the phone. He has something to look forward to.

EXT. PARK BENCH.

ALEX meets DESI for lunch on a park bench. Alex is reaching inside a bag.

ALEX  
Today is turkey subs.

DESI  
(tired voice)  
That works for me.

ALEX  
You okay?

DESI  
Yeah, just tired, but you wouldn't know about that.

ALEX  
I've been tired, just not sleepy.

DESI  
You've been exhausted, not tired.

ALEX  
Okay, sure.

DESI  
It's different, trust me.

A moment passes.

ALEX  
Anything I can do to help?

DESI  
Don't call while I'm sleeping.

ALEX  
Okay, I won't.

DESI  
I've heard that before.

Another moment passes.

DESI  
Alex, I need to say something, it's going to sound mean, but I don't mean it to be.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Okay.

DESI

It's exhausting knowing you.

Alex doesn't know what to say, so he says nothing.

DESI

I know I gave you terms and conditions before I said that, but I shouldn't have said that.

ALEX

No, it's fine.

DESI

It's just, since we met a year ago, I have been so tired. And I know you are the way you are, but I'm the way I am, you know?

ALEX

Yeah.

DESI

And I know you can't understand why I need to lay down in one spot for 6-8 hours a night.

ALEX

I know why you do.

DESI

But you know understand why I do - just like I don't understand why you don't. You never will, just like I never will. But you're a great person, so it's hard for me to be mad at you for that.

ALEX

I'll try to not wake you as much.

DESI

Thank you.

DESI and ALEX continue to eat lunch.

INT. DAVE'S HOME

DAVE

Let's take off from where we left off. Thanks for making time for me.

ALEX

Time is something I have a lot of.

DAVE

I guess it helps that I'm a night owl. With all this extra time, what do you really do with it?

ALEX

Nothing really. I spend a lot of time with my girlfriend.

DAVE

But she sleeps like a normal person... I mean, normally.

ALEX

No, you're right. Like a normal person.

DAVE

How does that affect your relationship?

INT. A DARK BEDROOM

DESI and ALEX are in the bed together. DESI is tired and ALEX is as he always is, awake.

DESI

What did you do before you met me?

ALEX

I went to school, just like I do now.

DESI

What about when you weren't in school?

ALEX

I don't know. I guess I walked around a lot.

(CONTINUED)

DESI  
In the middle of the night?

ALEX  
Yeah. Its not as scary as it sounds.

DESI  
Why did you do it?

ALEX  
To clear my mind. Once it was all cleared, my mind would wander. I let my imagination go crazy - I'd think, "what if some guy came out of no where with a knife"...

DESI  
What?

ALEX  
No, no, it was a good thing. I'd keep it going - how I'd react, what'd happen next. It'd be all a little scenario. (beat) It's the closest thing to a dream I could have.

DESI  
Did you have other girlfriends before me?

ALEX  
No, most girls thought I was strange.

DESI  
You are strange.

ALEX  
But that's okay with you...

DESI  
Yeah, that's okay with me.

DESI grows more and more tired.

ALEX  
What about the other day? You weren't okay with me then.

DESI

I was just tired, and I let it get to me.

ALEX

I'm glad you're okay now. I was beginning to think...

DESI has past out.

ALEX

Good night.

INT. DAVE'S HOME

ALEX

I think it affects it greatly.

DAVE

How so?

ALEX

I think we see each other... differently. I get the impression that I call her too much. I try not to, I really do, but time has never been something I keep track of very well.

DAVE

Has she told you this?

ALEX

Yeah, several times. She's always tired, and I feel responsible for it. So in the end, I feel like I can't get enough of her, while she is getting too much of me - despite our schedules.

DAVE

I'm publishing this article later this week. With the rise in people with your condition, there's no doubt there will be more people focusing on you. How do you feel about that?

ALEX

I just want to live a normal life.

INT. A DARK BEDROOM

ALEX sits in his bedroom as he did before - empty bed, click ticking away.

EXT. PARK BENCH.

ALEX and DESI are sitting on a park bench in the morning.

ALEX

How are you?

DESI

I'm tired Alex. I'm still always tired.

ALEX

I'm sorry.

DESI

I don't want to be, and I'm sorry if I sound upset with you, but you don't know what it's like. You don't know how short your fuse can get on no sleep.

ALEX

I know.

DESI

You don't understand how I feel when you wake me up several times a night. I've asked you to stop calling, but it's all look forward to every night. There's no one there to tell you not to, and I'm not the type to turn away your call.

ALEX

I don't want to be like this.

DESI

You shouldn't say that. You have a gift that no one, until recently, has ever had. You know what the worst part of it is? You're wasting it. I'm not saying you should be saving lives or changing the world, but I'm sure for whatever reason you have this gift, squandering it wasn't it's intended use. I feel

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DESI (cont'd)

like I'm letting you waste it, and I'm also suffering for it. I don't mind suffering for it, I've done it this long. But you haven't changed. You wait for me to wake up every night when I stay with you, and you call me every night I don't. When you have twenty four hours in a day, they can't be spent focusing on me. It's too much for me and too much for you. I've always said you should be learning a language or a skill, but I'm in the way of that.

A moment passes.

DESI

I've taken a new position with my job. It's temporary, but it's good money, and it'll lead to other things. I have to go away for a while. I've got to be honest - I'm looking forward to it. I hate myself for saying that, but you make me feel so exhausted, and I'm so jealous of what you have.

ALEX

I'm sorry.

DESI

And you apologize for it more than you should. Don't. I won't see you for a while. I honestly hope you aren't here when I come back. I hope are doing something with your life - for yourself.

DESI turns and takes a few steps, then turns back.

DESI

And Alex... (beat) Don't follow me.

ALEX's look "is unique", see director.

DESI walks away. V.O. begins. ALEX sits alone.

V.O.

(Dave's article)

Alex Page was the first of his kind. His struggles are apparent as he tries to fit into a society that  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

V.O. (cont'd)  
is too slow for him. I get the  
feeling that he must adapt or face  
failure. Whether he does or not, we  
must wait and see.

SOME TIME LATER.

EXT. PARK BENCH.

DESI comes back to her usual lunch spot to find Alex there.

DESI  
Alex...

ALEX  
Hi.

DESI  
Did you know I was back?

ALEX  
No, I didn't. I come here for  
lunch.

DESI  
Everyday?

ALEX  
Everyday.

DESI  
I wanted you to do something with  
your life, Alex. I blame myself for  
your stubborn attitude. Why...

ALEX  
*Sono così contenta che sei tornata  
e ti amo.*

DESI  
What?

ALEX  
It's Italian. I also know Arabic,  
Russian, and French. And Spanish.  
I'm not changing the world or  
anything, and I'm a slow learner,  
but you were right. It's a gift.  
And I hear there are a lot more  
people like me now, so I can't be a  
bad example to them.